

tion initiated in 1960 in which the State began using the millions of bushels of submerged old oyster shells as cultch material for young oysters. Prior to that time, as we know, there was not a sufficient amount of shell available from shucking houses to provide the cultch that was needed for State seed areas and the natural bars. But from 1961 through the spring of this year, as a result of the use of the old submerged shells, plantings in seed areas and on natural bars has amounted to approximately 5 million bushels of reef shell each year. And, as Mr. Sieling put it in his report: "Now, the slow process from careful planting to managed harvest is beginning to pay off."

You may recall that this was a prediction I made in previous talks at the annual dinners of this Association. In my remarks to you a year ago, I said I thought that we had "every reason to believe that the bold program which we initiated . . . is beginning to produce dividends — that the future of oyster production is bright." The reports which we are receiving on the catch this season indicate that this was not just wishful thinking — that our program of rehabilitation is indeed paying off.

I know, of course, that the interest of this Association, and its members, is not just with the oyster yield, although oysters do contribute well over half of the total value of Maryland's seafood catch. It can be said that comparable gains are being made in the catch of crabs, clams and finfish. The truly remarkable increase during the past decade in clam landings had been a source of amazement to those of us who have observed the progress of the seafood industry over a period of many years. Last year, I am advised, some 600,000 bushels of clams were caught and marketed. In terms of dollar value, that represents nearly 20 per cent of the total value of our seafood catch. But as someone said to me the other day, in discussing the increases in the shellfish yield: "Our problem now is to sell what we catch." This is where your role, as an organization and as individuals, becomes important. The promotion of bigger market for our seafood products is essential to the healthy growth of your industry.

As I have said to you before, I consider any program to strengthen the seafood industry in Maryland to be a cooperative effort of government, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the industry itself — the tongers, the dredgers, the crabbers, the clammers, the shuckers, the packers, the dealers and all others engaged in the production and marketing of seafood. Your State government acknowledges its responsibilities in this field. Our Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs, the Department of Economic Development, the Natural Resources In-